

**REMARKS**

The above amendment has been made to conform the claims to  
U.S. practice.

Respectfully submitted,  
**NATH & ASSOCIATES PLLC**

By: 

Gary M. Nath  
Registration No. 26,965  
Tanya E. Harkins  
Registration No. 52,993  
Customer no. 20529

Date: March 9, 2005  
NATH & ASSOCIATES PLLC  
1030<sup>th</sup> Street, NW - 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
GMN/TEH/ng:PCT\_Prelim. Amend.

Attachment A

1. (currently amended) A method for detecting molecules, in particular peptides, proteins, carbohydrates, glycoproteins, proteoglycans and/or nucleic acids, by means of a metal compound in the presence of at least one at least bifunctional agent, said agent having at least one hydrophobic moiety and at least one reducing moiety.
2. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the bifunctional agent is a molecule of the general formula X-R.
3. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 ~~or 2, characterized in that~~ wherein X is the reducing moiety.
4. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein X is a linear or homo- and/or heterocyclic hydrocarbon.
5. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein X preferably comprises at least one hydroxyl group, at least one sulfhydryl group, at least one carbonyl group, at least one thiosulfate group and/or at least one unsaturated carbon-carbon bond.
6. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein X is a molecule having antioxidative properties, for example a vitamin, preferably from the group consisting of vitamin A, vitamin C and/or vitamin E, in particular ascorbic acid.
7. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein R is the hydrophobic moiety.
8. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein R is a saturated or at least monounsaturated hydrocarbon, preferably an acyloxy, acyl and/or alkyl radical.

9. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein R is the acyloxy radical of the general formula  $-O-CO-C_nH_{(2n+1)}$ , where  $n = 8-21$ , preferably  $n = 11-17$ , in particular  $n = 15$ .
10. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the bifunctional agent is ascorbyl palmitate (= palmitoyl ascorbic acid), ascorbyl stearate (= stearoyl ascorbic acid), ascorbyl myristate (myristoyl ascorbic acid) or ascorbyl laurate (lauroyl ascorbic acid).
11. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the bifunctional agent is present at a final concentration of from  $10^{-5}$  to 1% (w/v), preferably from  $10^{-4}$  to 0.1% (w/v), in particular  $5 \times 10^{-4}$  to  $5 \times 10^{-3}$  (w/v) and preferably  $10^{-3}\%$  (w/v), during detection.
12. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the metal compound is a silver compound, preferably silver nitrate.
13. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the nucleic acids are DNA or RNA.
14. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the molecules are applied onto or into a support for detection.
15. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the support is a gel, in particular a polyacrylamide or agarose gel, a membrane, in particular a PVDF or nitrocellulose membrane, ~~and/or~~ a microarray support, in particular a biochip.
16. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein detection of the molecules, in particular those present on or in the support, comprises at least the following steps: fixing step, at least one washing

step, metal compound step, developing step ~~and/or~~  
stopping step.

17. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the bifunctional agent is used in the fixing step and, in particular, is present in a fixing solution.
18. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the bifunctional agent is used in an at least partially alcoholic solution, preferably as a component of the fixing solution, said alcohol preferably being ethanol.
19. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of claims 16 to 18~~ claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a complexing agent, preferably EDTA ~~and/or~~ EGTA, is used in the developing step and, in particular, is present in a developing solution.
20. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 19, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the developing solution comprises a reducing agent, preferably from the group of aldehydes, in particular formaldehyde, sodium carbonate, the complexing agent and/or sodium thiosulfate.
21. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the detected molecules are characterized, in particular studied mass-spectrometrically, after detection.
22. (currently amended) A kit for detecting molecules, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ comprising an at least bifunctional agent, said agent having at least one hydrophobic moiety and at least one reducing moiety, preferably in a fixing solution.
23. (cancelled)
24. (cancelled)